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Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

Provisional

6319th meeting

Monday, 24 May 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Salam	(Lebanon)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Silajdžić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	France	Mr. Araud
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Nigeria	Mr. Onemola
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Turkey	Mr. Çorman
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Anderson

Agenda

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Letter dated 14 May 2010 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2010/235)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Letter dated 14 May 2010 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2010/235)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to acknowledge the presence of His Excellency Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On behalf of the Security Council, I extend a warm welcome to Mr. Silajdžić.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Croatia and Serbia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Vilović (Croatia) and Mr. Starčević (Serbia) took seats at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Inzko to take a seat at the Council table.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from His Excellency Mr. Pedro Serrano, in which he requests to be invited, in his capacity as acting head of the delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. If I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Serrano.

There being no objection it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Serrano to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to document S/2010/235, containing a letter dated 14 May 2010 from the Secretary-General transmitting the thirty-seventh report of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by His Excellency Mr. Valentin Inzko, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. Inzko: These are special days for Bosnia and Herzegovina, as it is celebrating 18 years of membership of the United Nations. But they are also special days for my home country of Austria, as it was presiding over the Security Council in the month of May exactly 18 years ago. On 20 May 1992, the then Permanent Representative of Austria, Mr. Peter Hohenfellner, as President of the Security Council, proposed to this body the adoption of a decision recommending to the General Assembly that Bosnia Herzegovina be admitted to the United Nations.

At the same meeting, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 755 (1992), which endorsed that recommendation. Also at that meeting, the Council President prophetically stated that "All the members of the Council are confident that Bosnia and Herzegovina will make a significant contribution to the work of the Organization" (*S/PV.3079, p. 4*).

Upon that historic recommendation, 18 years ago, Bosnia Herzegovina was admitted as a Member of the United Nations by virtue of General Assembly resolution 46/237, adopted without a vote on 22 May 1992. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Bosnia Herzegovina wholeheartedly. I am very glad that, as predicted 18 years ago, Bosnia and Herzegovina is indeed making a significant

contribution to the work of the Organization as a non-permanent member of the Security Council.

I am also very pleased to see President Silajdžić sitting in the Security Council Chamber today, as it was he who, 18 years ago as Minister for Foreign Affairs, worked tirelessly for Bosnia and Herzegovina's recognition and membership in the United Nations. He did so then without having an office, a mission or even a fax connection. He has witnessed the tremendous progress of his country from war and admission to the Organization to its election to the Security Council.

We should keep that achievement of Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy at the forefront of our thinking as we deal in detail with the challenges that the country still faces. The country is facing problems that urgently need to be solved, but the fact is that it has come a long way. We should use that progress as an incentive to complete the work that still remains ahead.

Membership of the Security Council is the greatest and most visible reflection of Bosnia and Herzegovina's new standing in the international community. In addition, this year, the country has substantially completed the road map that may make it possible for Bosnian citizens to travel to countries in the European Schengen area without first having to apply for a visa. The European Union (EU) recommendation in that regard is still pending, but it could come as early as next week.

Furthermore, last month, at its summit in Estonia, NATO agreed to a membership action plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the condition that the issue of State ownership of military real estate is resolved. That success came as Bosnia and Herzegovina had already decided to accelerate the destruction of unsafe weapons and explosives left over from the war and to deploy troops to the NATO-led mission in Afghanistan.

Those three examples show how Bosnia and Herzegovina can concretely move forward, to the benefit of its citizens and the counties of the region.

I believe that an additional factor which strengthened Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress during the reporting period — and one that has received far too little attention — is the recent and much hoped-for improvement in regional cooperation, and consequently in the prospects for regional reconciliation, that is now evident. Put simply, the Western Balkans is a much better neighbourhood now than it was two or three years ago.

In the spirit of regional reconciliation, leaders and parliamentarians in Croatia and Serbia have addressed the tragedy of the 1990s in an honest and decent way. Let me here refer to President Tadić's efforts and to the Serbia Parliament's declaration on the Srebrenica genocide, and to the admission by Croatia of its role in the atrocities of the 1990s. This is creating space for a new and constructive dialogue that will benefit people throughout the Western Balkans.

It should be mentioned in this context that Turkey's role in this process has also been constructive, as was illustrated by the signature of the Istanbul Declaration on improving relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. In the same spirit, leaders of the region and the wider international community will gather on 11 July for the fifteenth commemoration of the atrocities in Srebrenica. President Silajdžić will be travelling today or tomorrow for an historic, unprecedented visit to Belgrade to strengthen this new sense of neighbourhood. Similarly, in a gesture of reconciliation, over the coming weekend President Josipović of Croatia will visit places where atrocities were committed in central and northern Bosnia in a gesture of reconciliation. These represent major steps forward, and we must seize the possibilities that they open up.

The informal EU/Western Balkans summit, which should gather some 40 delegations in Sarajevo on 2 June, can additionally boost this trend towards regional reconciliation and forward-looking cooperation. The coming and recent visits to Bosnia and Herzegovina by senior politicians and officials of the EU, the United States and elsewhere reflect not only international interest in the country, but also some concern over its inability to take advantage of the possibilities that are now open to it. As I pointed out when I spoke to the Council in November (see S/PV.6222), Bosnia and Herzegovina remains afflicted by a lack of a basic and fundamental consensus about what sort of country it should be or could be — whether a more centralized or a very decentralized State — and how to achieve either option.

The leadership of Republika Srpska has, for example, led the way in undermining State-level institutions and by threatening to hold an entity

referendum that would seek to repudiate the authority of the High Representative and decisions under Dayton. Any entity referendum challenging the authority of the Dayton Accords or the High Representative under annex X, or impinging upon the constitutional responsibilities of the State, would be unlawful and endanger the entity itself, as the entities derive their legitimacy from the same Accords.

References in an international gazette to the possible emergence of a new State, and proposals that nationalist politicians should start discussing the peaceful dissolution of Bosnia and Herzegovina or that the country should not exist at all have been met by counter-statements to the effect that the disaffected elements are welcome to leave, but will not be allowed to take any part of the country with them.

Thus, while regional prospects for reconciliation have improved, the language and logic of politics inside Bosnia and Herzegovina appears to have rather deteriorated. After Serbia's Parliament expressed its formal regret in March over the Srebrenica massacres, the Republika Srpska Government threatened to retract its endorsement of the 2004 report which established the facts about the events of July 1995 in Srebrenica.

The truth about Srebrenica and other shameful episodes of the war has been well established by the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia through criminal investigation, forensic research and testimony scrutinized and tested at war-crimes trials. The way forward is to face the truth and use it to ensure that such crimes are never allowed to happen again, and not to deny the truth.

While I have used my executive powers with appropriate restraint, these have been faced with continued resistance from the Republika Srpska. On 14 December, I extended the mandates of foreign judges and prosecutors working in the War Crimes Division of the State Court. This decision, based on the country's obligations to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, enjoyed the unanimous support of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council. The decision has, however, been strongly criticized by Republika Srpska.

Meanwhile, there have been problems in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where a divided Government limped from crisis to crisis during the reporting period. The Federation has failed to complete the appointments to Government and judiciary functions and the need to make budget cuts required by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the face of determined opposition from members of war veterans' organizations. The Federation has considerable difficulty dealing efficiently with the necessary IMF conditions, which may affect Bosnia and Herzegovina's fiscal sustainability in the medium and long terms. In this regard, as far as IMF negotiations are concerned, the situation is much better in Republika Srpska.

Let me give another example of the difficulties we face with the 22 December ruling of the European Court of Human Rights against discrimination against minorities in the election to the State-level Presidency and House of Peoples. While Republika Srpska representatives would agree to narrow constitutional amendments that would implement the 22 December ruling, Federation politicians, on their side, insist on far more wide-ranging changes, seeking to use the Court's verdict to promote their own very different visions of how the country should be restructured. The net result is that the European Court of Human Rights ruling will not be put into practice before the 3 October general elections, meaning that this autumn once again not all citizens will be able to candidate to all positions. This issue must therefore be a top priority of the new Government.

This chronic political disagreement has occurred at a time when unemployment has continued to rise, living standards have continued to fall, and the capacity of the authorities to meet the basic needs of citizens has been systematically eroded by declining revenue. With great difficulty the relevant authorities are striving to meet the IMF terms for a €1.2-billion Stand-by Arrangement; at the same time, generous development assistance continues to come from the World Bank, the EU and other international financial institutions and bilateral donors. However, none or very few of the key reforms that would allow the country to take full advantage of this assistance, and which would revive the economy and reverse the decline in employment and living standards, have been enacted during the reporting period; nor have the domestic authorities made any progress on the remaining objectives and conditions — the so-called 5+2 agenda — set by the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board in February 2008 for the

transition of Office of the High Representative (OHR) to a reinforced EU-led presence.

The objectives relating to State and defence property remain unmet. In December 2009 I provided the State, entity and Brcko District Governments with an inventory of the properties in question, but this has yet to jump-start constructive negotiation. Serb and Bosniak leaders rejected the OHR inventory — for opposite reasons. At the same time, the entities have declined to conduct their own assessment of what it is that institutions require in order to function properly. Now, unilateral steps to register properties under the ownership of the entities or the State threaten the whole exercise.

NATO's decision in April to make a Membership Action Plan conditional upon the State's taking ownership of properties required by the armed forces has so far shown no sign of producing a breakthrough. All this means that the condition according to which the Peace Implementation Council must be in a position to make "a positive assessment of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina based on full compliance with the Dayton Peace Agreement" looks somewhat remote, and it is not clear when a decision to close the Office of the High Representative could be taken.

In this respect, let me here welcome the European Council conclusions of 25 January, expressing readiness to extend the executive operation of the EU Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina should the situation require it. I myself remain convinced that we will need this presence beyond 2010 for reassurance purposes. Yet the authorities have demonstrated that progress can be made, as they pushed through the reforms that have made the country's bid for visa liberalization with the European Union a credible one. They did this in response to popular pressure on an issue concerning which the connection between reform and immediate benefits for citizens was clear.

In this respect, I have repeatedly highlighted the need to stress the causal links between reforms required for Euro-Atlantic integration and the practical benefits citizens will derive from the process. In the case of visa reform, the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina have shown that they are able to respond to the logic of popular demand. I believe this can be applied to other reforms that have been blocked until now. In other words, the election campaign can actually be used to create momentum for change, instead of being used as an excuse to keep things as they are. Elections in October could in fact help, particularly if voters both seek to hold their representatives to a real accounting during the campaign and then turn out in force on election day.

This year's election will see a surge of young people who are eligible to vote for the first time. This may alter the electoral arithmetic, and even a modest change could produce more constructive coalitions in the next Parliament. That is most likely to happen if the international community remains focused on Bosnia and Herzegovina, requires absolute respect for the Dayton Peace Agreement and continues to foster a constructive atmosphere for constitutional and other reforms. This is the way to get to the objective that we all want to reach — where Bosnia and Herzegovina can move towards full Euro-Atlantic integration under its own steam — and that means with full ownership of the responsibilities that go along with it.

I am truly convinced that this possibility can become a reality for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its people have shown on many occasions that they indeed have the talent needed. And I will, as High Representative but also as the EU Special Representative, continue to dedicate all my efforts to assisting and supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina's efforts in this direction. The European Union, too, is firmly committed to accompanying Bosnia and Herzegovina on this path, as was confirmed by High Representative Ashton's recent visit to the country.

Let me conclude by congratulating Bosnia and Herzegovina once again and by wishing it success in its contribution to the work of the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Inzko for his briefing.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Silajdžić (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, and to congratulate you on acceding to the presidency of the Security Council.

(*spoke in English*)

It was 18 years ago almost to the day that Bosnia and Herzegovina became a Member of the United Nations. In these 18 years, Bosnia and Herzegovina has travelled the difficult road from being a country that

suffered the worst atrocities and civilian plight in Europe since the Second World War to being a non-permanent member of the Security Council and an active participant in the peacebuilding efforts of the international community. As a grim reminder of Bosnia and Herzegovina's recent pest, this July we will solemnly mark the fifteenth anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide.

We have made progress in strengthening and advancing relations with our neighbouring countries Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia, contributing in that way to regional cooperation as one of the major prerequisites for lasting peace and stability in the region. Bosnia and Herzegovina has also made continued progress in meeting conditions for Euro-Atlantic integration. At their meeting held on 22 and 23 April in Tallinn, NATO foreign ministers granted the Membership Action Plan to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Accession to the Membership Action Plan is recognition of the progress achieved and a strong stimulus for an even greater commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration. Bosnia and Herzegovina has also met all the conditions required for visa liberalization with the European Union.

Even though Bosnia and Herzegovina has undoubtedly achieved significant progress, I have come here today to tell the Council that the Dayton Peace Agreement has not been implemented in its central parts. I will go into some detail on this subject, and I ask Council members to bear with me in those details.

The Dayton Peace Agreement has been continuously adjusted to the "realities on the ground", which have resulted from the systematic violations of the Agreement, and not the other way around. This is demonstrated by the fact that the report the High Representative has submitted here today (S/2010/235) is the thirty-seventh of its kind.

Most of the problems and challenges that Bosnia and Herzegovina faces today stem from the failure to implement the central elements of the Dayton Peace Agreement, particularly its annex 7, which guarantees the right of all refugees and displaced persons freely to return to their homes of origin in safety — a right confirmed by this Council's resolutions. As a result of the systematic and continuous violations of annex 7, out of some 46 per cent of non-Serbs who lived in Republika Srpska — an entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina — before they were either killed or cleansed, only 8 per cent live there now.

The failure to implement annex 7 has resulted in the most serious constitutional problem facing Bosnia and Herzegovina today. The so-called entity voting mechanism, which was intended as a safeguard for the legitimate territorial interests of the two entities as perceived by all three constituent peoples, has morphed into a mechanism by which one ethnic group from one entity blocks the State without any input from the other constituent peoples. And this mechanism continues to be used as if annex 7 had been fully implemented.

The entity voting mechanism allows only 10 Serb deputies elected from the Republika Srpska entity — who constitute only 22 per cent of Parliament's 42 deputies — to block any proposed decision of the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Over the past 13 years, these 10 deputies have used entity voting to block over 260 proposed laws. In contrast, Parliament enacted less than 150 laws in the same period. This ethnic monopoly on territorial interests solidifies ethnic division, renders the State dysfunctional and in turn perpetuates instability.

Certainly, the views expressed here are not shared by all political actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the United States Congress, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of Europe and the Venice Commission have all rightly identified entity voting as the main obstacle to the efforts to transform Bosnia and Herzegovina into a viable and self-sustainable country, capable of functioning in the absence of the Office of the High Representative. All of these institutions have recommended that entity voting be either eliminated or reformed, and all of their recommendations have so far been ignored.

The second fundamental problem — the question of State property — stems from the fact that the rights given to the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina through Annex 4, which is the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, have been set aside in favour of political compromises necessitated by the so-called realities on the ground.

Under article 1 of the Dayton Constitution, Bosnia and Herzegovina was established as the sole legal successor to the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and, as such, it remains the owner of all property registered to those predecessors. Similarly,

under the Succession Agreement — the agreement among all countries of the former Yugoslavia — Bosnia and Herzegovina is the owner of all former-Yugoslavia property on its territory. The entities have no ownership rights and no basis for claims over any such property.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's ownership of State property is the right guaranteed by article I of the Dayton Constitution and was unequivocally confirmed as such by a final and binding verdict of the State Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina — a court created by the Office of the High Representative, generously funded and supported by many Governments and staffed by international judges and prosecutors from an even greater number of countries.

It is therefore unacceptable to seek consensus to implement this existing law or to seek political compromises with those who block its implementation. The same mistake was made when the High Representative imposed entity-based privatization in 1998, with obvious negative consequences for the return of refugees, the consolidation of the single economic space and the reintegration of society in general.

One of the demands made by Slobodan Milosevic at Dayton was to divide State property between the entities. He did not achieve that goal, and it is puzzling that some still insist on that demand. It is true that Bosnia and Herzegovina has two entities under the Dayton Peace Agreement, but that Agreement also preserved the legal continuity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including, of course, ownership of the State property. That was one of the key balances that made Dayton possible, and it also served as a primary cohesive factor between the two entities. State property is as central to the Dayton Peace Agreement as the two-entity structure.

The High Representative rightly points out the continuing challenges to the Dayton Peace Agreement by the Republika Srpska entity authorities. But these challenges will not be answered by strengthening the position of the challengers, especially bearing in mind their open calls for a referendum on secession. Partitioning State property between the entities will obviously strengthen those claims and eliminate a primary cohesive factor. There is obviously a reason why that was not done in Dayton, and it cannot be quietly introduced now without far-reaching consequences. The High Representative's recent letter to the State Attorney of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in which he called on the State Attorney to stop the registration of State property, despite the fact that the State Attorney was merely acting on the basis of existing law and legal precedents, encountered strong opposition in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The High Representative did not use the Bonn powers, however. Thus this letter can only be construed as pressure on the courts and the judicial system that is outside the purview of those powers.

The Security Council had a very good reason for insisting on the implementation of the Dayton Agreement "in its entirety" (*resolution 1031 (1995), para. 30*) when it adopted resolution 1031 (1995). That is precisely what we advocate. The solutions and the myriad difficult compromises built into Dayton ensured that the Agreement would function if and only if all of its elements were fully implemented. The non-implementation of one element made the functioning of many others difficult, if not impossible.

Today, the implementation of Dayton in its entirety has been practically replaced by the implementation of the five goals and two conditions. Some of those goals and conditions have nothing to do with the Dayton Agreement — the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union, for example. Some of them were resolved in Dayton including the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina owns most of the State property as the legal successor of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as former High Representative Lajčák officially communicated. Some other central elements of Dayton are conspicuously missing from this list of five plus two: the right of refugees to return, for example.

It is not the sheer arbitrariness of this list that is disconcerting, but the fact that the closure of the Office of the High Representative, rather than the implementation of Dayton, has become a goal in and of itself. And one of the central elements of Dayton has been marked for change in order to serve that goal, namely, Bosnia and Herzegovina's ownership of State property.

This will not lead to Dayton's implementation in its entirety, but, more likely, to its demise. Dayton was a difficult compromise, creating the necessity for a number of its elements to function in unison. The

Office of the High Representative was put in place to ensure precisely such functioning, not to give legitimacy to à-la-carte implementation, just so it can leave. If the mission of the Office of the High Representative has morphed from full implementation mode to departure mode, we can only conclude that this transformation is not in accordance with the clear language of Council resolution 1031 (1995).

At the same time, we cannot be expected to provide assistance for that transformation. Not only do we take our international obligations — including under Security Council resolutions — seriously. We, moreover, remain conscious of the dangers facing Bosnia and Herzegovina if Dayton's central elements are slowly reduced, modified or completely taken away. For, if one central element of Dayton is on the table, so must be all the others.

In conclusion, I wish to state that article I of the Dayton Constitution, by which Bosnia and Herzegovina does not disappear but continues its legal existence as a State, was the outcome of the patriotic struggle and sacrifices of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of the assistance of friendly countries. That is precisely why no one has the mandate to question the meaning of that article or the other pillars of the Dayton Peace Agreement. It is our hope that the Security Council will continue to uphold the commitments of the Dayton Peace Agreement and remain the guardian of peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the region.

Ms. Anderson (United States of America): Let me begin by welcoming to the Council Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I thank him very much for his comments today. Let me also welcome High Representative Inzko and thank him for his comprehensive and excellent briefing. The United States deeply appreciates his dedication and hard work in support of implementation of the Dayton Accords.

Nearly 15 years have passed since the signing of the Dayton Accords. In that time, Bosnia and Herzegovina has made significant progress to overcome its past. The country now has a single military, has signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union (EU) and has taken steps towards NATO membership.

We welcome the decision of Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders to destroy excess arms and ammunition. The United States is proud to be a partner in that important effort. And in January of this year, we welcomed Bosnia and Herzegovina as a valued colleague on the Security Council. These important accomplishments all show that the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina want to live in a stable, functional State capable of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The United States supports the aspiration of Bosnia and Herzegovina's people for a European future.

With this in mind, let me highlight three concerns raised by High Representative Inzko's report (see S/2010/235). First, while some progress has been made on defence and other necessary reforms, more needs to be done. We share the High Representative's conclusion that Bosnia and Herzegovina has made only limited progress in addressing constitutional and other reforms necessary for EU candidacy. We urge Bosnia's leaders to cross the ethnic divide and find the compromises needed to build a functional State that can meet EU and NATO requirements.

As Vice-President Biden said to the Bosnian Parliament on 19 May 2009, the United States is proud to support a peaceful, successful Bosnia and Herzegovina. But to achieve this goal, Bosnia's leaders must work together across ethnic lines and party lines and interact with the rest of the world as a single sovereign State.

Along with our European partners, the United States will continue to engage with participants from all of Bosnia and Herzegovina's communities in promoting the constitutional reforms needed for the country's eventual integration into the EU and NATO. But ultimately, the burden of achieving the country's aspirations rests on Bosnia and Herzegovina's political leaders and depends on their responsibility, commitment and willingness to compromise.

Secondly, like many in Bosnia and Herzegovina and many in this Chamber, the United States looks forward to the day when the Office of the High Representative will no longer be needed. Again, we urge Bosnia's leaders to find the compromises needed to fulfil the remaining requirements, particularly on immovable defence property. In this regard, we also share High Representative Inzko's concerns about what the report calls a deteriorated political atmosphere, including challenges to the High Representative's authority. In numerous resolutions, the Council has

affirmed the High Representative's Bonn powers and his responsibility to exercise them to ensure peace, stability and compliance with the Dayton Agreement.

Thirdly, as we approach the October 2010 national elections, we are concerned that divisive and damaging political rhetoric may threaten regional reconciliation efforts, undermine progress on the country's Euro-Atlantic agenda and distract attention from real national priorities. It is simply unacceptable to propose or speculate about the dissolution of the State, even a peaceful dissolution. It is important for the country's leadership to break the troubling cycle in which narrow ethnic and short-term political interests are pursued at the expense of long-term objectives that would benefit all of Bosnia and Herzegovina's communities.

Despite the challenges that lie ahead, Bosnia and Herzegovina's responsible and constructive tenure on the Council to date demonstrates again the positive role that the country can play in the international community. We welcome the progress that Bosnia and Herzegovina and its neighbours have made to promote reconciliation, improve bilateral relations and confront the legacy of the past by condemning war crimes.

In April, NATO foreign ministers invited Bosnia into NATO's Membership Action Plan, but with the clear expectation that the issue of immovable defence property must be resolved before Bosnia and Herzegovina can advance in the process. This decision shows the international community's confidence that Bosnia and Herzegovina will undertake the important reforms still needed to strengthen its institutions and function more effectively as a State. The ultimate responsibility for resolving these issues rests with its leadership.

The United States remains committed to the framework established by the Dayton Accords and to strengthening State institutions. We also remain firmly committed to Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty and territorial integrity and its integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions, in line with the goals of its leaders and the wishes of its citizens.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): At the outset, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, His Excellency Mr. Haris Silajdžić, and to thank him for his statement made this morning. My appreciation also goes to High Representative Valentin Inzko for his comprehensive briefing. I commend the dedicated efforts of Mr. Inzko and his staff made with sincerity and passion to address complex and sensitive issues on the ground in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina on its contribution to international peace and security as a member of the Security Council since January. The successful post-conflict nation-building effort of Bosnia and Herzegovina is amply reflected in its active membership of the Council.

Encouraging positive developments include the acceptance of Bosnia and Herzegovina's application for a NATO Membership Action Plan, with some conditions, and the prospects for visa liberalization for travel by citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina to European Union (EU) countries.

The country's relations with Serbia have improved dramatically, as President Silajdžić and President Tadić signed the Istanbul Declaration at the recent summit meeting, along with President Gül of Turkey. We commend the flexibility shown by both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and the important role played by Turkey in achieving this milestone.

Japan fully supports the policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina towards Euro-Atlantic integration. We hope that the country will be able to meet the five objectives and two conditions soon and that the transition from the Office of the High Representative to the EU Special Representative will be realized at the earliest possible date.

Bosnia and Herzegovina can advance its efforts towards accession to the EU by accelerating constitutional reform. In that connection, we note with concern that neither the five objectives and two conditions nor constitutional reform have seen concrete progress. Certain potential causes of instability remain, as manifested by the recent adoption of the law on referendum by the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska.

It is important that the October general elections be conducted in a fair and stable environment. We urge all parties to refrain from escalating the ethnocentric rhetoric and to adopt a reasonable and restrained attitude. The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina requires continued engagement by the international community. We believe it is essential that the High

Representative make full and appropriate use of his authority. When a negative sign is detected, he should exercise his early warning function and hold consultations with the parties concerned.

Japan, as a member of and major contributor to the Peace Implementation Council, reaffirms its full support for the High Representative's role. Japan continues to contribute to the economic development of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to promoting human security for every individual in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in other countries in the Western Balkans.

Mr. Rugunda (Uganda): We thank Mr. Inzko, High Representative and European Union Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his briefing. We welcome the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, His Excellency Mr. Silajdžić, and thank him for his statement.

We commend the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina for its important contribution to the stability of the country. We also commend the High Representative for his efforts in facilitating the implementation of the Dayton Agreement. It is important that all leaders in the country continue to commit themselves to dialogue and peaceful coexistence.

We note with concern from the briefing the reported political actions questioning the sovereignty and sustainability of Bosnia and Herzegovina's State institutions, as well as the continuing challenges to the authority of the High Representative and the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council. We call on all leaders, particularly the authorities of Republika Srpska, to refrain from anti-Dayton rhetoric that challenges the sovereignty and constitutional order of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is important that all parties, including the neighbours of Bosnia and Herzegovina, uphold their commitments in the spirit of good neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

The European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR) has continued to play a critical role in providing the crucial reassurance needed by the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We note that it has assisted the Office of the High Representative and other international organizations in fulfilling their respective mandates. We therefore salute EUFOR, in collaboration with the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for contributing to a safe and secure environment. It is important, however, that every effort be made to support the role of the national security forces so that they can assume responsibility for protection.

We welcome the progress that has been achieved in the country in the entrenchment of the rule of law. We acknowledge the efforts of the European Union Police Mission, in coordination with the High Representative, to support police reform and coordinating the policing aspects of combating major and organized crime.

We note, however, that the situation of refugees and displaced persons remains outstanding. This is a potentially destabilizing matter if not addressed in a holistic way. We therefore call on the authorities to address this matter with a view to ensuring their return and resettlement.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has made tremendous economic progress. However, the global economic crisis has had an adverse impact and the country needs to mitigate the effects of the global slow-down on the economy, particularly by protecting the most vulnerable population. We therefore call upon the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the support of the international partners, to focus on addressing these issues, which could have serious implications for the stability of the country.

Finally, we once again commend the High Representative and his staff for the good work that they are doing.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the High Representative for the statement that he has just given and assure him of France's support. I welcome the presence of Mr. Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and congratulate him on his country's presence in the Security Council. France associates itself with the statement to be made by the representative of the European Union.

We welcome the progress made by Bosnia and Herzegovina on two important matters. First, on the matter of the road map for lifting the visa obligations, the report transmitted on 26 April by the European Commission to the Council of Europe and the European Parliament stresses the progress made on securitizing documents in the fight against illegal

immigration and for readmission. This represents a step forward that brings Bosnia closer to the liberalization anticipated by Europeans and Bosnians alike. Secondly, on the matter of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a month ago the allies offered Bosnia and Herzegovina the Membership Action Plan on the condition that the property of the Bosnian Ministry of Defence be duly registered.

Unfortunately, much remains to be done. Month after month, year after year, we have called on the Bosnian authorities to resolve the internal conflicts that are hindering their country from progressing towards the prospects we offer. Unfortunately, judging from the Secretary-General's report (S/2010/235) and the tone and substance of the briefing we have just heard, we are still far from that point.

In 10 days, a Western Balkan summit will take place in Sarajevo, 10 years after the Zagreb summit, which enshrined the prospects of European membership for all the countries of the region. However, the international community has had a massive presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina for 10 years and helped to rebuild its institutions. Objectives and conditions have been set to seek a transition that would allow the Bosnian authorities themselves to decide the fate of their country. The European Union and the United States have made a commitment to a process to facilitate negotiations among the Bosnian leaders and to help them to meet the conditions set and to implement limited constitutional reform.

To our regret, the country's political leaders, in particular those of Republika Srpska, have not seized this opportunity. On the contrary, they have stepped up their attacks on the international community which is trying to stabilize the country. Such attacks are intolerable on the part of the leaders seeking to get their country into the European Union and NATO. We call on all leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina to adopt an attitude worthy of the larger interests of their country, especially in the run-up to the October elections. It is high time that the interests of their citizens be taken into account and that the latter no longer be held hostage to an outdated political game.

We welcome the gestures made in the region in recent months, showing that dialogue and reconciliation have a place in the Balkans and that the regional cooperation sought by the European Union is not a pipedream. Once again, we call on the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina to implement such initiatives at the national level and to finally engage in a positive process that will confirm Bosnia and Herzegovina's European perspective. The international community cannot resolve the problems of Bosnia and Herzegovina on behalf of its leaders and people. The fate of their country depends on them alone. It is up to them to understand that an honest compromise is better than outmoded rhetoric or sterile intransigence. It is up to them to exhibit the courage to resolve their problems.

Mr. Onemola (Nigeria): I welcome His Excellency Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and thank him for his statement. I thank High Representative Valentin Inzko for his briefing on developments in the country during the past six months.

Nigeria welcomes the positive developments, including the progress made in addressing the conditions for visa liberalization with the European Union, as well as the acceptance of Bosnia and Herzegovina's application for a Membership Action Plan by NATO. We are pleased with the improved relations between the country and its immediate neighbours, resulting in increased diplomatic activity among them, as well as the furtherance of reconciliation and the promotion of peace within the region.

We note that attacks against State institutions and nationalistic rhetoric undermine efforts to promote peace and stability. Such actions have also constrained efforts by the High Representative and the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council to fully implement their mandates. The limited progress made in implementing necessary reforms and in meeting the outstanding requirements set by the Steering Board for the transition from the Office of the High Representative to a European Union presence requires attention. The General Framework Agreement for Peace needs sustained support.

If these issues are not handled properly, they could trigger further tension and possibly affect the general election slated for October. The leaders must demonstrate the requisite political will to promote reconciliation, peace and development in the country and the region as a whole. In this regard, we urge political leaders to refrain from divisive and

anti-Dayton rhetoric, as this may impede the progress recorded thus far. They should also commit to dialogue and compromise in resolving their differences.

We welcome the efforts of the United States and the European Union to assist the country in resolving the remaining issues on the agenda set by the Peace Implementation Council for the closure of the Office of the High Representative and in reforming the Constitution within the framework of the Dayton Agreement. We also welcome the follow-up meeting being facilitated by the United States in June.

We note the call by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe for constitutional reform, and the Sejdic-Finci decision on the election eligibility provisions of the Constitution. It is our hope that any envisaged process will take into account the specific circumstances and concerns of all the country's peoples. We appreciate the role of European Union peacekeeping, in collaboration with the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in fostering stability and security in the country. We urge the High Representative to continue with his efforts to promote the admission of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the European Union.

In conclusion, we urge continued support for the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in its efforts to implement its justice sector reform strategy, to promote the return of internally displaced persons, and to strengthen its economy. We call for concerted action by the international community to facilitate attainment of the goals of these reform efforts.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): It is an honour to welcome His Excellency Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and I thank him for his statement. I also thank High Representative Valentin Inzko for his informative briefing.

As we mark the eighteenth anniversary of the admission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations, there are many more reasons for celebration. A safe and secure environment in the country continues. Progress has been made on many other fronts, such as the efforts towards Euro-Atlantic integration, the accession to the NATO Membership Action Plan, and important developments in the economic situation, despite enormous challenges. Also encouraging is the fact that the regional situation has improved and that Bosnia and Herzegovina's relations with its neighbours are developing constructively. The positive role the country is playing in the international community, as illustrated by its active membership in the Security Council, is also commendable. These developments show that unity and a sense of common purpose among leaders can bear fruit not only in key strategic spheres, but also in the form of benefits of direct and immediate interest to ordinary citizens.

We join others in expressing concern at statements and decisions made by political leaders in the entities, especially Republika Srpska, that are inconsistent with the Dayton Peace Agreement. Challenges to the authority of the Security Council, the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board and the High Representative must cease. Protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina is indispensable. The Security Council must continue to closely monitor the situation on the ground.

As the country prepares for the next general elections in October, nationalist and divisive rhetoric is particularly worrisome. We urge all parties to exercise maximum restraint in this regard. At the same time, efforts to strengthen the State at the national level should preserve the rights and prerogatives of all communal entities. This is an important issue that has to be addressed carefully. We therefore support initiatives, such as the Butmir process, that seek to engage the leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina in this discussion. We hope that efforts in this regard can be sustained so that they bear fruit soon.

The strong message of unity, cooperation and peaceful coexistence that we all send today to Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders is also valid for the Western Balkans as a whole. We congratulate the Serbian Parliament on the resolution adopted in March regarding the Srebrenica massacre of 1995. Although some might have preferred a different wording for it, the historic apology made by the Serbs represents a significant step towards reconciliation in the subregion. Also encouraging was the address delivered in Sarajevo by President Josipović on Croatia's policies during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The international community should continue to help Bosnia and Herzegovina find ways to overcome political difficulties and strike the appropriate balance between centralization and decentralization. We are certain that the country, with our continued support, will succeed in consolidating a fully functional and

self-sustaining State. This is the only way to the future of peace and prosperity that all in Bosnia and Herzegovina wish for and rightfully deserve.

Mr. Moungara Moussotsi (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to thank him for his informative briefing. I would also like to thank Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the quality of the presentation of his third report (S/2010/235) on the implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in that country. Gabon takes this opportunity to commend him highly for his ongoing efforts to effectively implement the Dayton Peace Agreement.

As noted in the report, significant progress has been made in several areas, including the construction of infrastructure, visa liberalization with the European Union, and Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress towards membership of NATO. To these advances we must also add the status of non-permanent member of the Security Council, to which Bosnia and Herzegovina is making a very significant contribution. This represents the manifest recognition of the international community of the efforts being deployed by the authorities of the country to improve its future in the political, institutional, economic and security sectors.

Although we welcome the achievement of these steps, we are concerned about the various stumbling blocks that continue to hinder the full implementation of the Peace Agreement. The delay in setting up the Office of the Special Representative of the European Union, for example, has hindered the attainment of some goals of the Agreement and the candidacy of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the European Union.

A few months from the holding of general elections in October 2010, it is very important that the parties respect the obligations that they voluntary undertook when they signed the Peace Agreement. In this respect, we would encourage them to cooperate fully with those involved in implementing the Peace Agreement, including the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. To that end, we welcome the decision taken by NATO to maintain its presence in this country in order to continue to contribute to the effectiveness of the Peace Agreement, with the reassuring cooperation of the military mission of the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

My country remains committed to the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina and praises the efforts of the authorities of that country to launch a national dialogue and reconcile with its neighbours. I would therefore urge them to continue along this path and to remain committed to the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (Austria): At the outset, let me warmly welcome Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and thank him for his important contribution.

I should also like to welcome the High Representative, my friend and countryman Mr. Valentin Inzko. We would like to thank him for the report he submitted to the Council (see S/2010/235). We fully share his assessment of recent developments and the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We would like to reaffirm our full and continued support for him and his Office, as well as for the efforts that he has been undertaking to fully implement the Dayton Accords and to facilitate reform. High Representative Inzko recalled the contribution my country was able to make on this Council in 1992. Eighteen years later, as partners and neighbours of Bosnia and Herzegovina, at this very Council table we look back to that contribution with great satisfaction.

We would like to align ourselves with the statement to be delivered by the delegation of the European Union (EU), but I should also like to make the following additional points.

We congratulate Bosnia and Herzegovina on its progress on the path towards Euro-Atlantic integration. In its assessment, the European Commission has attested that Bosnia and Herzegovina meets most of the benchmarks set out in the visa road map. We are also encouraged by the fact that, in Tallinn on 22 and 23 April, NATO foreign ministers offered Bosnia and Herzegovina a Membership Action Plan, and we hope that the condition to find an appropriate solution regarding immovable defence property will be fulfilled in due course.

We are pleased by the genuine commitment shown in recent weeks and months to achieving regional reconciliation. Both the adoption by the Serbian Parliament of a resolution on 31 March

condemning the massacres in Srebrenica and offering apologies to the families and relatives of the victims and the visits of the Presidents of Serbia and Croatia have clearly added to the stability of the entire Western Balkans region. We believe that Chairman Silajdžić's own forthcoming visit to Belgrade will provide another opportunity to substantially improve regional cooperation.

Unfortunately, progress on other important and long-overdue reforms has been slow and has in many cases stalled completely. We are very concerned by the fact that this lack of progress is mostly due to deliberate obstruction directed against the functioning of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Fulfilment of the five objectives and two conditions for the closure of the Office of the High Representative, the implementation of the recent rulings of the European Court of Human Rights and the adoption of a census law applicable to the entire State are prerequisites for the proper functioning of the State. We also hope to see progress on constitutional reforms after the elections on 3 October. These reforms will increase efficiency, help Bosnia and Herzegovina to implement the reforms necessary for accession to the European Union and thereby contribute to stability and economic growth, to the benefit of the entire population of the country.

We appeal to all political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to refrain from the use of divisive and nationalistic rhetoric in the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections. We are particularly concerned by the increase in the number of legal and political actions that have been directed against State institutions, competencies and laws, as well as challenges to the authority of the High Representative, including the adoption of a law by the National Assembly of Republika Srpska on the potential holding of a referendum. In this respect, it is particularly worrying that political leaders of Republika Srpska have repeatedly questioned the sovereignty and sustainability of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is not acceptable.

Against the background of the global financial crisis, the upcoming elections will be a crucial opportunity to provide the population with serious choices pertaining to necessary economic and social reforms. We agree with the assessment of the High Representative that the European Union-led peacekeeping force in Bosnia and Herzegovina still plays a key role in contributing to a safe and secure environment that helps the Office of the High Representative and other international actors to implement their mandates. This assessment is also reflected in the conclusions of the European Union Foreign Affairs Council on 25 January and by resolution 1895 (2009). Austria will maintain its commitment as one of the core troop contributors to that operation.

Finally, let me reiterate our firm conviction that the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the entire region lies within the European Union. That is by far the best way to create a broad zone of stability in the Balkans. This message was again confirmed at a high-level expert seminar that the Austrian Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger hosted in Vienna on 12 May. Experts from the Western Balkans and the European Union addressed the current political, economic and social challenges of the Western Balkans with a view to EU integration. We hope that these discussions and the resulting recommendations will contribute in a positive fashion to the debate on the future enlargement of the European Union that will be an important part of the upcoming EU-Western Balkans summit in Sarajevo on 2 June.

Mr. Çorman (Turkey): Let me begin by welcoming His Excellency Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He has come to New York right after his visit to Istanbul, where he attended the Somalia Conference. Let me extend once again the gratitude of my authorities for his participation and most valuable contributions.

I would also like to take this opportunity to sincerely congratulate President Silajdžić on the election of his country to the Security Council. The presence of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Council is a clear sign of the confidence that the international community has entrusted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Turkey feels privileged to share this historic occasion with that country.

We are also pleased to see High Representative Valentin Inzko among us again. I want to thank him for his unrelenting efforts and leadership, as well as for introducing the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General (S/2010/235) and the succinct briefing he provided today.

As a Balkan country itself, Turkey attaches great importance to achieving lasting peace and stability in

the region. We consider a sovereign, democratic, and stable and functional State of Bosnia and Herzegovina in its internationally recognized borders to be an undeniable prerequisite to this objective. That is why, in addition to our excellent bilateral relations and as underlined in the briefing of the High Representative, Turkey continues to make every effort to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina in its endeavours to promote regional cooperation. Indeed, regional ownership and inclusiveness should also be key elements in our quest for peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In this context, the Turkish initiatives of holding high-level trilateral meetings among Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, as well as among Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, have surely contributed to the enhancement of regional understanding and collaboration. The Istanbul Declaration signed on 24 April 2010 by the Presidents of Turkey, Serbia and Mr. Silajdžić himself is an important step in this direction. It will not only strengthen the bilateral relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia but will also help create an environment conducive to regional dialogue and cooperation. We understand that Mr. Silajdžić will now be travelling to Belgrade, after his visit to New York. We very much welcome that initiative and congratulate Mr. Silajdžić on his leadership in thus continuing the positive momentum created between the two countries.

We also thank His Excellency High Representative Valentin Inzko for his generous words of recognition and praise concerning Turkey's sincere efforts. We express our resolute intention to continue them with the same determination.

We are glad to see that, since the conflicts of the 1990s, Bosnia and Herzegovina has made considerable progress. Of course, there are still daunting challenges ahead, and progress has not been as swift as we all expected. But, given its turbulent past, Bosnia and Herzegovina is certainly making important strides in the right direction. In that regard, cognizant of the fact that the future of the region is closely tied to that of Europe as a whole, we firmly support the aspiration of Bosnia and Herzegovina to fully integrate with the Euro-Atlantic institutions, and we hope that those institutions will also embrace Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In that frame of mind, we greatly welcome the decision taken at the NATO ministerial meeting, in Tallinn, on 22 April 2010, accepting the application of Bosnia and Herzegovina to join the Membership Action Plan. We are hopeful that the condition put forward for that step will soon be met, so that Bosnia and Herzegovina can start to benefit from enhanced cooperation with NATO members. Bosnia and Herzegovina should be further assisted in that direction.

At the same time, we appreciate the progress achieved in addressing the conditions for visa liberalization with the European Union. Again, we hope that the remaining technicalities will soon be resolved, and that Bosnia and Herzegovina will enjoy the same status as its regional neighbours. In that regard, Turkey supports and appreciates the efforts of the European Union to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina to take its rightful place in the European family of nations, including by providing stability with its Police Mission and through Operation Althea. As an active contributor to both of those missions, Turkey will remain ready to continue and increase its contributions.

Having said that, and as I have already suggested, we cannot help but share the concerns of Mr. Inzko about several aspects of the domestic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in particular with respect to anti-Dayton rhetoric and actions that challenge the sovereignty and constitutional order of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The report of the High Representative depicts those issues in great detail, and we agree in general with the High Representative's observations.

Let me also underscore that we firmly support the High Representative in using the powers granted to him, in order to lead Bosnia and Herzegovina to a better future. Hence, we do not agree that the actions of the High Representative are unlawful and reject the challenges to the authority of the international community and that of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board. In particular, the new law on referendum adopted by the Republika Srpska would be in clear violation of appropriate legislation and valid international legal mechanisms, and is therefore unacceptable.

In the run-up to the general elections scheduled for October, to whose free and fair conduct we attach utmost importance, we want to see all parties embrace a common vision and act in accordance with it, rather than pursuing parochial ethnic interests. Thus, we reject all secessionist intentions, support the democratic forces in the country and remain hopeful

that the democratic ideals and aspirations of the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina will eventually overcome divisive tendencies.

Let me conclude by stating once again that the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the Euro-Atlantic structures will eliminate any feelings of exclusion, instil confidence in the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina and ensure the country's future as a strong, stable, secure and full-fledged European country. Turkey is fully committed to that objective, and we will do everything possible to assist the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina to achieve their rightful place in the international community.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I too would like to welcome among us Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina and European Union Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to thank them for their statements.

The delegation of Mexico welcomes the active participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an elected member of the Security Council. This demonstrates the progress that the country has made over the past several years. Bosnia and Herzegovina's strategic rapprochement vis-à-vis the European Union and the development of more fluid cooperative relations with its neighbours are important steps forward in consolidating the country's role on the international stage and in promoting stability in the Balkans. Yet these positive international developments should be accompanied by improved political understanding in the domestic arena. To bring lasting peace and stability to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the country's various political forces must intensify their dialogue and understanding and must demonstrate political will to make genuine progress on pending aspects of the peace process.

That is why we regret the extreme divisionist and nationalist rhetoric of one of the parties, along with its attempts to challenge the activities and mandate of the High Representative and Special Representative of the European Union. We reiterate our call to all political actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina to redouble their efforts to meet outstanding commitments, such as those relating to refugees and displaced persons, State property and security sector reform. We also call on them to keep open the path of negotiation and dialogue in order to narrow their differences and avoid action that could endanger the country's stability, in particular with a view to the general election to be held in October.

We consider that the presence of the European Union military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR) continues to be necessary to guarantee the country's security through its support for the Office of the High Representative and other international entities in fulfilling their mandates, and by providing training and assistance to the country's security forces. The international community should continue to support the efforts of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to strengthen the rule of law.

We regret that, yet again, it has not been possible to achieve the political consensus necessary to implement the provisions of annex 7 of the Dayton Peace Agreement, which provides for the establishment of a comprehensive strategy on the return of refugees and displaced persons. That is why we call once again on State authorities to take stronger action to implement the National War Crimes Prosecution Strategy, the National Justice Sector Reform Strategy and the package of constitutional reforms. We must ensure that the legal framework is compatible with the country's international human rights obligations with respect to equality before the law and non-discrimination.

In that respect, we hope that efforts to compile information on war crimes not yet in the central database, the investigations concerning the 1,381 cases already presented to the Office of the Chief Prosecutor, and the broadening of legal cooperation agreements with other countries of the region will soon yield results that will make it possible to fight impunity and make progress in the national reconciliation process. All those efforts should include greater cooperation by all States in the region with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

I should like to conclude by reiterating Mexico's support for the work of the High Representative. We hope that Bosnia and Herzegovina will succeed in permanently overcoming differences and consolidating a multi-ethnic democratic State in which its citizens can, along with all the citizens of the Balkan region, enjoy a more stable and prosperous future as an integral part of Europe.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We have listened carefully to the assessment of the current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of that country. Unfortunately, that assessment was unilateral and unconstructive.

We thank Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his introduction to the Council of the report on developments in that country (S/2010/235, annex, enclosure). We cannot recognize that document as objective and balanced. Consistent with the negative practices used in preparing it, the report suffers from overt anti-Serbian excesses.

Republika Srpska is being held responsible for the difficult pre-election political atmosphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the destructive role of Federation politicians is being hushed up. Nor has there been proper focus on Federation politicians who have blocked the consideration of Republika Srpska's compromise constitutional amendments, which were designed to alleviate the concerns expressed by the European Court of Human Rights in its 2009 verdict. The report's criticism of the law on referendum recently adopted in Republika Srpska sidesteps the fact that its sphere of application is limited to the jurisdiction of that entity.

In spite of a certain increase in the temperature of political rhetoric in the unfolding campaign leading up to the general election scheduled for 3 October, the overall situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina could be deemed satisfactory. In a number of areas, local authorities have been able to achieve decent results.

With regard to the report's defence of constitutional changes in Bosnia, we should take the position that the major role in such processes belongs to local political figures and that these reforms should be implemented solely with the consent of all Bosnian parties, as called for in the Dayton Constitution. We agree with colleagues who have today noted how important it is for Bosnian parties to achieve that type of agreement. The role of the international community is to assist in reaching compromise, not to impose quick fixes.

We believe it important to make further efforts to promptly attain the goals and conditions agreed upon by the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, which are designed to bring about conditions for drawing down the Office of the High Representative and converting it into a mission of the European Union Special Representative.

With regard to the final unresolved question of the division of State property among various levels of authority, it is essential to rely on the Steering Board's agreed territorial and functional approach, which provides for transfer to the pan-Bosnian level of sites for State agencies. Entity bodies would then exercise all remaining relevant powers.

With regard to the High Representative's emergency mechanisms, especially the so-called Bonn powers, we believe that the sphere of their application is limited to the areas of ensuring the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of compliance with the Dayton Peace Agreement — and here I might observe that the question of violations of Dayton has not been noted for a number of years. In our view, it is unacceptable to use those tools for short-term political purposes, especially to resolve economic disputes.

Russia is prepared to work together with partners to continue to provide Bosnia and Herzegovina with all possible support in building a modern democratic State on the basis of the Dayton Peace Agreement. We believe that the upcoming elections will be an important step in that direction, confirming Bosnia's ability to address the challenges before it. For our part, we will continue to interact constructively with the delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Security Council.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I too would like to join other Security Council colleagues in welcoming to the Council Chamber today His Excellency Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina. I would also like to thank the High Representative for his comprehensive, balanced and sobering report on developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the past six months (S/2010/235, annex, enclosure). The United Kingdom fully supports and appreciates the High Representative's efforts to uphold the Dayton Agreement and to facilitate the reform process in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The United Kingdom supports European Union (EU) enlargement to all the countries of the Western Balkans. EU integration is crucial to entrench stability

there. We are concerned that, while some countries in the region have made significant progress over the past year, Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to be held back by political deadlock. We do not want to see Bosnia and Herzegovina fall behind the rest of the region.

Like the High Representative, the United Kingdom welcomes recent positive steps on regional cooperation in the Western Balkans. The Serbian parliamentary resolution condemning the Srebrenica massacre was a welcome step towards greater reconciliation in the region. Serbia, Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina have sought to improve their relations through the Istanbul Declaration. We urge Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue to respond positively to such initiatives. We look forward to the forthcoming high-level Sarajevo meeting on advancing regional cooperation.

We share the serious concern set out in the High Representative's report about the internal political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the past six months. In particular, we regret the lack of political will to deliver progress on key reforms and the challenges to the Dayton Agreement and to the High Representative's authority. The United Kingdom fully supports all the decisions taken by the High Representative during the reporting period. We are concerned about plans for a referendum in the Republika Srpska entity challenging the legitimacy of the High Representative's decisions. All actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina need to be clear that the international community, including the Security Council, is fully committed to the country's territorial integrity and to the framework established by the Dayton Agreement.

The European Union has made clear that a membership application from Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be considered while the Office of the High Representative remains in place. It is therefore essential that Bosnian leaders work constructively together to deliver the remaining objectives and conditions, which remain necessary for the transition of the Office of the High Representative to take place.

Furthermore, the European Union has been clear that constitutional reform is required in order to create a functional State. Central Government in Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to be effective enough to meet the responsibilities of EU and NATO membership. The European Court of Human Rights ruling on minority rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina underlines that wider need for constitutional reform. Progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina on delivering the necessary reforms for European visa liberalization demonstrates what can be achieved when the political will exists.

The High Representative's report highlights the economic difficulties faced by Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is important, therefore, that the relevant authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina meet their obligations under agreements with international financial institutions, particularly the International Monetary Fund. This requires the necessary legislation not only to be enacted, but also promptly and efficiently to be implemented.

The United Kingdom welcomes the decision taken by NATO foreign ministers to conditionally offer Bosnia and Herzegovina a Membership Action Plan. This is a strong signal of NATO's commitment to stability and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnian leaders now need to focus urgently on delivering the one final condition by resolving the issue of defence property. Unless this issue is resolved, the recent positive decision on the Membership Action Plan cannot be progressed further.

We agree with the High Representative's assessment of the ongoing importance of the role played by the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina in underpinning stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Bosnia and Herzegovina for its contribution to the work of the Security Council so far this year. We look forward to continuing to work closely with that country for the remainder of its time on the Security Council.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank you, Sir, for having convened today's meeting. We also thank the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Inzko, for his briefing and for his efforts to achieve progress in the political process in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I welcome the presence at today's meeting of the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Haris Silajdžić, and thank him for his statement.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has remained generally stable of late. Reforms in the area of the Constitution, the rule of law and national defence have contributed to some progress. Preparations are under way for the general elections scheduled for October, and economic reform has achieved some results.

At the same time, Bosnia and Herzegovina is confronting challenges that merit the due attention of all parties. These challenges have been exacerbated by attempts to hinder the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, which threaten to undermine State sovereignty and authority, as well as existing legislation. The integrity of the State is under threat.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, economic development has slowed, hampered by the international economic crisis, while social problems have been exacerbated, which is a cause of concern. China respects the independence and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the right of its various ethnic groups to choose their own paths to development. We sincerely hope that all parties concerned in Bosnia and Herzegovina will strive to implement the Dayton Peace Agreement and work actively for dialogue to strengthen the political and reconciliation process, to ensure the success of the general elections to be held in October, to achieve further progress in the political and economic areas, and to bring peace, stability and prosperity to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the entire Balkan region.

We support the efforts of the international community to strengthen its mediation with a view to attaining high-level dialogue and concrete results. We hope that the International Monetary Fund will duly address the dire consequences of the economic and political situation in the region and pursue vigorous measures to improve it.

China welcomes the intention of the European Union (EU) to continue to play an active role in maintaining security and stability and promoting socio-economic development in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The EU Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina has begun to extend military assistance to the Bosnian army, which will help to safeguard State sovereignty. China and Bosnia and Herzegovina share a long-standing friendship and have seen their relations thrive. Mr. Nikola Špirić, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, recently concluded a successful visit to China, and we are doing our utmost, alongside the international community, to contribute to sustainable peace and development in his country.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Lebanon.

At the outset, I wish to thank His Excellency Mr. Haris Silajdžić for his statement. Our thanks go also to High Representative Inzko for his comprehensive briefing. We commend his efforts to promote the political process and assure him of our full support.

We support Bosnia and Herzegovina in its endeavours to meet the objectives and conditions of the Dayton Peace Agreement and the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council, which will ultimately lead to the closure of the Office of the High Representative. We support Bosnia and Herzegovina as it embarks on a path that will lead to stability and prosperity. The country has seen positive developments, in particular with regard to meeting the conditions set by the European Union for visa liberalization and to relations with its neighbours.

We also believe that the issues of State property, filling key public positions and the return of refugees and internally displaced persons should be resolved. That will require serious dialogue with a view to achieving genuine reconciliation and cooperation that will allow the State to perform its functions. Any diversion from those principles will have a negative impact on all parties, irrespective of their political orientation and position, and on the economic situation and livelihoods of Bosnia's citizens.

In the light of the elections to be held in October, we call on all actors to exercise restraint and to refrain from engaging in inflammatory rhetoric that focuses on narrow ethnic interests and magnifies divisions. With regard to the escalation of rhetoric attacking State institutions, we stress the importance of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are concerned over any attack on the Balkans, and on Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular.

In closing, we commend the positive environment prevailing in the region and welcome the announcement by Croatia and Serbia of their support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia

and Herzegovina. We commend Turkey for its role in conducting tripartite talks among Bosnia and Herzegovina and its two neighbours. This initiative will strengthen stability and good-neighbourly relations. We cherish the hope that Bosnia and Herzegovina will enjoy a future of security and prosperity.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Croatia.

Mr. Vilović (Croatia): At the outset, allow me to welcome His Excellency Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. My delegation is particularly pleased that his country is participating in this debate for the first time as a member of the Security Council.

We also welcome Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative and European Union (EU) Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and thank him for his briefing. The report he presented introduced (S/2010/235) reflects the challenges and complexities of the situation. I would also like to reaffirm Croatia's full and continued support for him and his Office, and to express our appreciation for the personal effort he invests in carrying out his mission.

Croatia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the European Union in a few minutes. Here, I wish to make some additional comments.

Croatia strongly supports the clear and unambiguous European and Euro-Atlantic perspective of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Our support for and commitment to the European perspective for Bosnia and Herzegovina, as for all the countries of South-East Europe, was formalized in the delivery of our translation of the EU acquis communautaire to the prime ministers at the Croatian-Slovenian regional conference in Brdo, near Kranj, in March this year. We believe that membership in the European Union is the future of all countries of South-East Europe as the most suitable framework for their overall development. We also warmly welcomed the recent invitation extended by NATO to Bosnia and Herzegovina to join its Membership Action Plan, a step that Croatia strongly and actively supported.

For Croatia, the territorial integrity, sovereignty and equality of the three constituent peoples are the basic preconditions for the country's stability and sustainability. Assisting Bosnia and Herzegovina in reaching sustainable stability and functionality is one of our regional priorities.

As we just heard, the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina have made significant progress in the area of visa liberalization requirements. Croatia is strongly convinced that this progress should be recognized and hopes to see visa liberalization implemented in the course of this year. The citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina deserve the same privileges as the citizens of other countries of the region. Any delay would only benefit those advocating the status quo, and the peoples and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina would continue to bear the consequences beyond their direct responsibilities.

The stability, security and progress of South-East Europe are in Croatia's strategic interest. We firmly support all the countries of the region in their reforms, and we offer them our assistance and experience on their EU and NATO integration paths. Following the success of the Zagreb summit, we believe that the time is ripe to re-energize the process. Thus, we look forward to the upcoming conference to be held in Sarajevo on 2 June — marking the tenth anniversary of the Zagreb summit and bringing together ministers of foreign affairs of the EU and the region — as an additional impetus for Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue more energetically with the necessary reforms and to further its efforts towards Euro-Atlantic integration.

However, Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to face considerable problems, some of which are challenging its very foundations as established by the Dayton Peace Agreement. Regrettably, we have heard that in most other areas only limited progress has been noted and that some serious challenges have been raised by the authorities of Republika Srpska to State institutions and their functioning, as well as to the authority of the High Representative. Croatia urges the political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina to find strength and reach compromise on issues key to a sustainable future for the country, its peoples and citizens. There will be no progress without consensus — which has to come from within — and which Croatia, together with other friends of Bosnia and Herzegovina, strongly advocates.

Croatia calls for negotiations on constitutional reform to be continued as soon as the new authorities are formed after the October elections. Further delays on constitutional reform could have long-term consequences for the country's future, constitutional reform being a key precondition for successful Euro-Atlantic integration. Croatia advocates constitutional amendments that would provide full equality for all constituent peoples, as well as for all citizens, applied throughout the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In this process, the political views of the representatives of the three constituent peoples should be valued equally, as the country's stability depends on respect for the constitutional principle of the collective equality of all three constituent peoples — Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats — and all citizens. We have stated on several occasions that there cannot be a Bosnia and Herzegovina without Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their political and cultural survival is vital to the continued existence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as these two elements are closely intertwined. Given the singular position of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina as the smallest and most vulnerable group, it is all the more important that their voice be considered on a basis of equality, both ethnic and civic, as guaranteed in the Constitution and as arising from the history of the country. All three peoples must feel that Bosnia and Herzegovina is their country, and they should feel safe and protected throughout its entire territory. Their fundamental rights and freedoms, as well as their civic and ethnic rights, should be protected throughout, and their right guaranteed to return safe and protected to their pre-war homes.

The fight against impunity for war crimes is yet another important factor in the normalization of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Croatia firmly believes that the mandate of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia cannot be declared complete without bringing to justice the two remaining fugitives, Ratko Mladic and Goran Hadzic, indicted for the most atrocious crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia. It is also important that, at the same time, national courts fulfil their lasting responsibility and address other war crime cases.

In such circumstances, Croatia believes that it would be premature to begin the closure of the Office of the High Representative this year. In this regard, Croatia is concerned by the general sense of fatigue in the international community and believes that a strong international commitment is still very much needed in order to help improve conditions that will move the current situation forward and help remedy the remaining fundamental problems.

Before closing, I would like to reiterate that Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina enjoy a very close, friendly and cordial relationship on many levels. Strong Croatian support has been duly recognized by Bosnia and Herzegovina and is manifested by our intense and frequent communication at the highest level, underscored by a number of visits exchanged. As noted in the High Representative's report, over the past months both President Josipović and Prime Minister Kosor visited Sarajevo, while the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina visited Zagreb. The Government of Croatia and the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina are preparing a joint session, which should take place next month. We therefore believe that the observation made in paragraph 20 of the High Representative's report, implying strained political relations, is surely inadvertently imprecise.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Serbia.

Mr. Starčević (Serbia) I would like first of all to welcome Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The delegation of Serbia has studied the thirty-seventh report on the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement (S/2010/235) and listened to the views expressed in the Council today with keen interest. As a signatory and guarantor of the implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and pursuant to resolution 1031 (1995), Serbia is consistently and firmly committed to full respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Proceeding from the strategic foreign policy priorities and commitments of the Republic of Serbia to the promotion of relations with neighbouring countries, I would like to confirm once again the support of my country for the integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and our readiness for close cooperation in all areas of mutual interest, particularly in building peace, stability

and prosperity in the Balkans and in furthering our common goal of joining the European Union (EU).

As a country committed to maintaining good-neighbourly relations, Serbia is a staunch advocate of the lasting stabilization of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It will respect every agreement reached by consent of the two entities and by consensus among the three constituent peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina containing sustainable solutions that are in the spirit of modern democratic values. We encourage all participants in this process to do everything that is necessary to achieving such an agreement. Similarly, it is by upholding the principle of consensus — two plus three — that Serbia views the ongoing process of transfer of competences from the Office of the High Representative to the EU Special Representative.

Guided by its resolve to help achieve complete normalization and foster a new quality of relations, Serbia has taken important steps towards full national reconciliation. The declaration on Srebrenica adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia is a clear signal of the support of my country to Bosnia and Herzegovina and of our readiness to confront the past and take political responsibility for the future and well-being of the region.

The Declaration adopted at the Istanbul summit by the Presidents of Serbia and Turkey and the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the results of the trilateral meetings of the Foreign Ministers of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey held thus far have made an important contribution and given impetus to the promotion of good-neighbourly relations, better regional cooperation and a common European future.

Serbia views the development of its relations with Republika Srpska on the basis of the Agreement on Special Parallel Relations to be within the context of its efforts to strengthen overall relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina. I wish also to point out that my country supports the continuation of negotiations and concrete work on the resolution of border issues between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

Serbia supports Bosnia and Herzegovina on its road to the European Union and strongly advocates its inclusion in the EU decision on visa regime liberalization. Serbia expects that the EU-Western Balkans conference, to be held in Sarajevo on 2 June, will encourage the EU commitment to continuing the process of enlargement.

Serbia continues to believe that bilateral and intra-regional economic cooperation provides a special impetus to the lasting stabilization of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as of the entire region of South-East Europe and the Western Balkans. For its part, Serbia stands ready to cooperate fully in this regard.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Pedro Serrano, acting head of the delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

Mr. Serrano: I wish to thank you, Sir, for having invited the European Union (EU) to today's important meeting.

The candidate countries Turkey and Croatia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Montenegro; as well as the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

I wish to thank High Representative Inzko for his presentation and reiterate the full support of the EU for his Office and actions. We have also listened carefully to President Silajdžić's important statement, and I wish to express my gratitude for the cooperation and support Bosnia and Herzegovina has extended to the European Union during its membership in the Security Council.

As the High Representative has reported, Bosnia and Herzegovina has made some progress in recent months in advancing its European and Euro-Atlantic perspectives. We commend these developments and encourage further efforts. It is also encouraging that regional cooperation in the Western Balkans has continued to develop positively, with renewed constructive engagement from Serbia and Croatia and with Turkey playing a useful role. We look forward to the momentum that will be generated by the EU-Western Balkans ministerial meeting in Sarajevo on 2 June. But as the High Representative has pointed out, the overall political climate in Bosnia and Herzegovina has continued to be negative.

Unhelpful rhetoric has increased in the run-up to the elections scheduled for 3 October. It remains a matter of great concern that the authority of State institutions and competencies and the authority of the High Representative have been increasingly challenged over the past six months. The adoption of a new law on

referendums by Republika Srpska may be particularly worrying should it be used to challenge the existing constitutional framework. The European Union wishes to reiterate its strong support for High Representative Inzko and calls on all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to comply fully with the decisions taken by him and not to seek to challenge his authority. We underline once again our firm commitment to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Against this backdrop, we encourage all political leaders to work for the long-term interests of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Consensus is urgently needed to achieve political reforms and to tackle significant economic and social challenges.

The European Union is firmly committed to and fully engaged in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The European Union is using all instruments at its disposal, including by providing significant financial assistance and expertise. The Lisbon Treaty gives us new impetus and new possibilities for an enhanced political presence in the country in the future. Through our two missions on the ground, the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR ALTHEA) and the European Union Police Mission, the European Union supports Bosnia and Herzegovina's efforts to maintain a safe and secure environment.

The European Union is committed to continuing the executive mandate of EUFOR ALTHEA in accordance with resolution 1895 (2009). Should the situation require it, the EU stands ready to maintain an executive military role to support these efforts beyond 2010, under a United Nations mandate. Building on its achievements, the operation has started to provide non-executive capacity-building and training support, thus contributing to strengthening local ownership and capacity. The EU Police Mission mandate has also been extended until the end of 2011, with a specific focus on fighting organized crime and corruption and on enhancing cooperation among police, prosecutors and the penitentiary system.

We firmly believe that the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina indeed lies within the European Union. We are encouraged that, when there is political dialogue and consensus, the country can achieve reforms. Visa liberalization is a concrete example. As a result of Bosnia and Herzegovina's good progress in meeting the benchmarks, the European Commission is working on a proposal for updating the Schengen white list, on which the Council and the European Parliament will decide together in the coming months.

Such positive political will also needs to be demonstrated in other areas to ensure that Bosnia and Herzegovina does not fall behind the rest of the region in its European integration process. As High Representative Ashton noted in her address to the Security Council on 4 May (see S/PV.6306), steps remain to be taken by Bosnia and Herzegovina to secure a well-functioning State. In particular, additional efforts are needed in order to meet the outstanding requirements - five objectives and two conditions - for the closure of the Office of the High Representative, notably regarding State and defence property. The European Union has been clear that it will not be in a position to consider an application for membership by Bosnia and Herzegovina until the transition of the Office of the High Representative to a reinforced EU presence has been decided.

Progress is also needed on constitutional reform to enable the better functioning of Bosnia and Herzegovina institutions, as well as to implement the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights on the rights of minorities to stand for election and be appointed to important State-level institutions. The law on census should be adopted without further delay. The European Union continues to attach importance to a full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

In his report, the High Representative has set out some urgent and pressing reform priorities for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many of these are essential if Bosnia and Herzegovina is to realize its ambition of EU accession. Without them, Bosnia and Herzegovina compromises its strategic priority and risks falling further behind other countries in the region as regards the European integration process. We cannot afford to waste time. It is the responsibility of the Bosnia and Herzegovina leadership to move ahead rapidly and constructively, and to do so as soon as possible.

As high-level visits by High Representative Ashton and Commissioner Füle have shown, the European Union remains fully committed to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and will remain so after the eventual closure of the Office of the High Representative. In turn, we encourage all of Bosnia and Herzegovina's political leaders to be committed to the European

Union and to act in support of Bosnia and Herzegovina's European aspirations.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to make a further statement.

Mr. Silajdžić: Let me thank the representatives of the countries now members of the Security Council for their valuable contributions, comments and views, which my country will certainly take into consideration, especially since, as I have said, I came here today because I believe that the basic law of Bosnia and Herzegovina — the Dayton Peace Agreement and especially its pillars such as the Constitution and its article I — is being questioned right now, in particular on the issue of State property.

This is not about the property, per se, in Bosnia and Herzegovina; it is about the character of the State and the character of our Agreement. The Agreement, signed by all the countries present at Dayton, is that Bosnia and Herzegovina continues as a State under international law. So, we believe that maintaining the Dayton Agreement, as it is, is vital to peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Of course, the Dayton Agreement came at a great price for citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially Bosniaks and Croats. Tens of thousands were killed and hundreds of thousands remain to this day in the diaspora, ethnically cleansed. So that is why we will not allow anyone to question that to which all of us agreed in Dayton. It may appear to some that Bosnia and Herzegovina managed to prevail in Dayton by remaining a unified country. But I assure the Council that what I have described is a fact of life. And I am very sorry and regretful to have heard here that the representative of the Russian Federation viewed my speech as not constructive.

The Russian Government participated in the Dayton Agreement procedures, and they are a part of the process. The Russian Government agreed to and signed the Dayton Peace Agreement as a guarantor. I regret that the Russian Government continues uncritically to support only one ethnic group in Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is not a very good contribution to peace and stability and to maintaining the Dayton Agreement as the basic law for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Agreement ended genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina and brought peace to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it must be maintained.

Let me end on a personal note here, because High Representative Inzko reminded me of our beginnings. When Bosnia and Herzegovina was attacked, it is true that I, as the Foreign Minister, did not have a telephone here — not even a chair to sit on. At that time, Foreign Minister Mock and the Austrian Ambassador to the United Nations extended their help to Bosnia and Herzegovina and to our efforts to defend our country. For that I am grateful. And of course I am grateful also to all those who helped us during those difficult moments for our people and our State.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of the Russian Federation wishes to make a further statement, and I give him the floor.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Of course, I was not planning to take the floor again, and I certainly do not wish now to become involved in a debate on the foundations of the divergent assessments of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, or on the differing assessments of the factors hindering agreement among the Bosnian parties on pending problems. I do not think we need to do that during today's meeting. The positions of all external participants assisting the Bosnian settlement process are well known. My country's position in particular is well known.

Something on which we cannot fail to agree with Mr. Silajdžić is that the Dayton Agreements must be strictly and fully implemented by all parties. That is absolutely certain. And we have consistently been assisting to that end through our contacts and our relations with all the Bosnian parties. I will leave the assessment we heard from Mr. Silajdžić as a matter for his own conscience. I am absolutely certain that the ongoing efforts of the Russian Federation in support of full implementation of the Dayton Agreements and in support of the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina are well known.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently a member of the Security Council, and I will reaffirm what I have already said: that we will continue to constructively cooperate and interact with the delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the entire range of items on the Council's agenda. This is an important and critical stage in establishing Bosnia and Herzegovina's statehood, and we are certain that Bosnia and

Herzegovina will successfully pass through this stage and will work successfully in the Security Council.

The Russian Federation is absolutely convinced also that we have every reason to believe that all parties and political actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the firm basis of the Dayton Agreement, will resolve their disputes and achieve consensus on all pending issues for the effective establishment of a democratic Bosnian State, in the interest of strengthening stability and security in the country and throughout the Balkan region.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.